

Canticle Farm, Inc. A California Experience:
By: Melissa Scholl OSF

Shortly after the beginning of Canticle Farm, Inc.'s 19th season, on a snowy day in late February, we discovered that Canticle Farm, Allegany, was known in California. The CEO of the Interfaith Sustainable Food Cooperative in Sebastopol, California, invited us to join a panel at their Faith, Food & Farms conference discussing the use of religious properties for beginning, migrant, and refugee farmers. And while Canticle Farm in Allegany is not on religious property, its creation as an expression of Franciscan spirituality, an act of environmental justice, the intense need to preserve farm land, and provide naturally grown produce to the population, fit right into the purpose of their conference

*On March 19th, faith-based groups gathered in Richmond, California, to share faith and traditions, report and share their progress in and intentions to reconnect individuals to a sustainable food system by utilizing their worship property, and continue to plan their advocacy work. **The topics covered included:***

- Perspectives on Food and Faith
- CSA's – Congregational Supported Agriculture for All
- Gardens and Farms on Lands Owned by Religious Institutions (my panel)
- Greening and Localizing the Food Pantry
- Produce Stands & Mobile Farmer's Markets
- Sustainable Food Policy Advocacy
- Food Waste Reduction: Composting & Gleaning
- Advancing our Vision of Faith-based Community Supported Agriculture
 - Where to go from here?

As we know feeding people is ultimately a justice issues. Establishing personal or local gardens and farms -no matter the size, are opportunities for interfaith discussion. Discussions we can bring to the Inter-faith groups with whom we relate. We can be the seed that initiates conversations and action concerning food for God's people into the future.

From where will food come?

How fresh and healthy will this food be?

Who will produce the food and who will have access?

Who will advocate for all of the above?

If faith based groups don't see this as their responsibility, who will?

PS The story of my lodging at Canticle Farm, Oakland, CA, an Intentional Franciscan community is another part of the CA adventure. Then of course there was the Green Gulch Farm and Zen Center that I visited.

Happy and Blessed Easter to all.